

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 PC-01 SY-05 SCCT-01 MC-02 OPR-02 SSO-00

/080 W

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P R 021100Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1397

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

WSEMBASSY CONAKRY 143

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A M Q NIAMEY 3071

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, NG

SUBJ: KOUNTCHE MOVES AGAINST VICE PRESIDENT

ACCRAFOR AMBASSADOR HECK

1. PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE WENT ON RADIO EARLY THIS MORNING TO ANNOUNCE ARREST OF VICE PRESIDENT SANI SIDO FOR QUOTE EFFORTS TO DIVIDE NIGERIEN PEOPLE, SUBORDINATION OF THE COUNSTITUTION TO AN IDEOLOGICAL CLIQUE, CORRUPTION, INTIMIDATION OF OFFICIALS, INFLUENCE PEDDLING, AND RECONSTITUTION OF A DISSOLVED PARTY-- ALL TO THE END OF SZYZING POWER. UNQUOTE. ALSO ARRESTED WERE FORMER SAWABA PARTY CHIEF DJIBO BAKARI AND FORMER DIORI CABPNET MEMBER MAITOURAGE GADJIO. NEUTRALIZATION OF CHARISMATIC BUT DEVIOUS VICE PRESIDENT, WHO WIDELY RECOGNIZED AS CHIEF THREAT
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TO PRESENT REGIME, HAS CAUSED ONLY SLIGHT SURPRISE

HERE AND BUSINESS AS USUAL ATMOSPHERE PREVAILS IN
NIAMEY TODAY.

2. AS BACKGROUND TO KOUNTCHES MOVE, WE CAN DISCERN
FOLLOWING ELEMENTS: 1) RECENT PUBLICITY GRABBING AND
GRANSTANDING EFFORTS OF SANI SIDO; 2) MOUNTING
PSYCHOLOGICAL TENSION IN RECENT WEEKS ABOUT PROSPECTS
FOR OCTOBER HARVEST WHICH GIVEN IMPETUS IN LAST FEW
DAYS BY REPORTS OF ACTUAL MIGRATIONS INTO CAPITAL OF
FARMERS SOM AREAS NORTH OF NIAMEY; 3) EXAMPLE OF
NIGERIA WHERE COUP COMING AT TIME OF KOUNTCHE'S ABSENCE
IN KAMPALA PROBABLY UNDERLINED TO PRESIDENT THE
PRECARIOUSNESS OF HIS OWN POSITION AND TRIGGERED HIS
UNEXPECTED RETURN JULY 30.

3. WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS AN ACTUAL PLOT, KEY
CATALYST ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING,
MAY HAVE BEEN EFFORTS OF SANI TO ENLIST SUPPORT OF
CHIEF OF STAFF ALI SAIBOU WHO IN TURN TIPPED OFF PRESIDENT
THAT A MOVE AGAINST HIM WAS COMING TO A HEAD. IN ANY CASE
WITH SANI REMOVED, SAIBOU HAS NOW STEPPED EVEN CLOSER TO
THE TOP, AND AS PROBABLY MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURE IN
THE ARMY AT PRESENT HE WOULD NOW SEEM TO HAVE EMERGED AS
MAIN PILLAR OF KOUNTCHE'S REGIME. WE SUSPECT PUBLIC REACTION
WILL BE ONE OF STRONG SUPPORT FOR KOUNTCHE AS
SEEMINGLY FORCED TO MOVE IN A PREEMPTIVE WAY.

4. FIVE MATTER OF FACT WAY IN WHICH EVENTS HAVE
DEVELOPED SO FAR, WE NOT REPEAT NOT ADVISING
AMERICANS TO TAKE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS. WE ARE,
HOWEVER, QUIETLY SPREADING WORD TO EMBASSY FAMILY
TO KEEP LOW PROFILE AND AVOID GOSSIP OR
PROBING INTO WHAT IS CLEARLY A DELICATE INTERNAL
AFFAIR. DAVISON

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